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69. **Herbarium Suggestions**—No. 4. *Drying Specimens.*—At the time of collecting specimens, and while laying them between the thin sheets of the portfolio, no special care is necessary to straighten out the leaves, and other parts of the plant. This would often be interfered with by the wind in the open field, and, moreover, the vegetable tissue is elastic and the parts of the plant will not "stay put," when arranged at this time. At the subsequent early changes of the driers, however, and especially on the first change, this matter should receive careful attention ; all folds and doublings-up of leaves, petals, etc., should be removed, and the whole specimen should be arranged as nearly as possible to conform to its natural appearance before collection.

At the same time that this is done, let pieces of bibulous paper be interposed between any leaves or other portions of the plant which overlap each other, in order to prevent their moulding and hasten their drying, and change these fragments of paper subsequently when changing the driers.

The more bibulous the paper composing the driers, the better. A good quality for the purpose may sometimes be found in large paper stores, but is somewhat expensive. Ordinary newspapers, of suitable size, will answer. For the convenience of handling, the drying paper is made up into packets of about twelve thicknesses, and this is sometimes done by stiching them together, but a far better way is to unite them by two of "McGill's paper fasteners" placed about an inch from the edge of one of the sides.

When fastened in this way, the packets may be dried by placing them astride of a clothes-line in the open air, or on a string stretched across the room ; and this is much better than having them lying about on the floor to be trodden on by the feet and with only one surface exposed to the air.

We should always have a large supply of packets so as to use them liberally, especially when the specimens are thick and succulent. In the latter case, also, sheets of thick pasteboard are desirable to interpose here and there between the packets to prevent a thick stem from indenting its neighbors.

For pressing plants, two boards with weights on top are best: all screw presses are objectionable, since, as the plants shrink in drying, they cease to receive the necessary pressure. This point has already been mentioned in a previous number of the Bulletin, p. 16.

In drying plants, they are retained continuously in the thin sheets of paper in which they were at first placed, but their position in the sheet is advantageously changed from time to time as soon as the plants are sufficiently dry to bear motion without crumpling.

Plants that are sticky and liable to adhere to the paper enveloping them may be sprinkled over with some inert powder, as that of Lycopodium or powdered soapstone. *(To be continued.)* F. J. B.

70. **Sesuvium pentandrum**, Elliott.—Is Sesuvium pentandrum a distinct species or only a variety of *S. Potulacastrum*, L.? To judge

from our Manuals, one would infer that its characteristics were so fickle as to make it unworthy of being regarded even as a variety of the *Portulacastrum*, for neither Gray nor Wood alludes to its existence.

Chapman recognizes both species, and evidently considers them entirely distinct; and, as they are peculiarly southern plants, his opinion would seem to be worthy of much consideration.

As the plants are seldom seen at the north, I venture to give their peculiarities:

S. Portulacastrum, L.—Leaves lanceolate and oblong, acute; flowers *pedicelled* nearly ½ an inch, stamens numerous, 15 to 60; *perennial;* Florida and northward.

S. pentandrum, Ell.—Leaves spatulate, obovate, obtuse; flowers *sessile; stamens five* in the sutures of the Calyx; *annual?* Fl.—N. C.

Chapman places an interrogation mark after *annual*, and it is important to determine what the fact may be.

It has been common for many years past to give the range of *Sesuvium Portulacastrum* "from N. J. southward," and yet I am inclined to believe that the typical form of this species with numerous and variable stamens does not occur at all upon the shore of N. J. My evidence is of course negative, but such as it is I give it. The first notice that I find of the genus in N. J. is in Nuttall's Genera of Northern Plants (1818), where it is described as *S. sessile,* DC., "leaves spathulate, flowers sessile"—which, to judge from the above description, was *S. pentandrum.* Since Nuttall, *S. Portulacastrum* has continued to be quoted from "N. J. southward." The genus is not mentioned in Torrey & Gray's Plants of the U. S.

In the summer of 1870, I discovered *S. pentandrum* at East Hampton, L. I. (Bulletin Vol. I., § 91.) Prior to that time I believe it was not known to grow north of N. J. I recently received from Mr. J. H. Redfield, of Philadelphia, a letter in answer to inquiries, from which I make the following extract:

"In the summer of 1869 my friend C. F. Parker of Camden collected at Cape May, N. J., a Sesuvium which he supposed to be of course the *Portulacastrum,* L., until an examination showed him it was the *pentandrum,* Ell. Last summer I found at Atlantic City, N. J., a Sesuvium which I also supposed to be the *Portulacastrum,* until a close examination showed it to be the other form. I am also informed that Dr. Leidy of Philadelphia has collected *S. pentandrum* at Cape Henlopen, so that, including your locality (East Hampton, L. I.), we have now four points for it, reaching from Cape Henlopen to the east end of Long Island. But the curious point in the matter is that in this region at least of our sea coast no one, so far as I can learn, has found the typical *Portulacastrum.*"

Here then is a plant growing for 300 miles along our coast, invariably of one form—the pentandrum. Surely this indicates a persistency which should entitle the form to rank at least as a *variety.*

Mr. Redfield was good enough to send me specimens both from Cape May and Atlantic City. They fulfil the concise and exact description of Chapman, and correspond entirely with my own specimens from East Hampton. J. S. Merriam.